

# YOUR WORLD THIS WEEK

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Welcome again to "Your World This Week" — your very own letters page. There must be lots of interesting experiences — sad, happy or amusing — that you'd like to share with other readers. We pay £1.25 for every letter we print, and £2.00 for a household hint. Just send your letter, which must be original and not duplicated in any other publication, to:

## A SLY MOVE

My daughter had been in her new house just two days. With half-filled packing cases littering the hall, and bits of old carpet put down to cover the floorboards, she was "up to her eyes."

Her battered old car was in the drive, its engine in pieces on the path (her husband was in the process of fixing it), when she answered the door to a gipsy, with the traditional basket balanced on her hip.

"Good morning, my dear," said the old woman. "That's a lucky face you have. You're going to move shortly into a new house. And I can see a new car for you in the future. Would you like to buy . . . ?"

— Mrs P. A., Cardiff.

## YOUNG LOVES

"How awful," I remarked to my husband when I saw the pictures of hysterical young girls at a pop concert recently.

Then I remembered when I was 16 I must have been even sillier. I saved up for a year to go to America to visit Alan Ladd, the film star.

Alas, at the end of the year I had managed to save the grand sum of five pounds!

— Mrs E. C., Darlington.

## A GREAT KNIT!

Not long ago I spent hours knitting a very pretty tea-cosy for my friend, carefully choosing the colours to match her best tea-service.

I was speechless, therefore, when she wrote to thank me for "such a lovely hat, it'll keep my hair tidy and my head so lovely and warm in the cold weather . . . "

— Miss M. S., Leeds.

[If that's what she wears on her head, what does she put round her teapot?]

## HARD CHEESE!

I'm always fascinated by the pictures in magazines advertising refrigerators — they're always so full of deliciously fresh-looking food.

All my fridge ever seems to contain is a few rather soggy tomatoes, half a carton of yoghurt and perhaps, if I'm really lucky, a piece of rather tough-looking bacon!

— Mrs R. T., Felixstowe.

## NO WRITE!

My 13-year-old son was anxious to discover what his teacher had written on his English essay. The only problem was, he couldn't read the teacher's remarks.

When he asked the teacher what he had written, my son was told, in rather embarrassed tones, "It says you should write more clearly."

— Mrs B. J., Wiltshire.

## COLD HANDS, WARM HEART . . .

After our wedding my husband and I posed outside the church for photographs for a seemingly very long time. It was a cold afternoon in January and all the guests must have been frozen.

My husband, however, seemed oblivious to the cold. "True love conquers all," I told myself romantically.

But when I mentioned it to him later on at the reception, he told me:

"I thought it would be chilly, so I kept my pyjamas on underneath my suit!"

— Mrs D. M., Oxfordshire.

## SLEEPING-PARTNERS

I have always envied my husband his ability to fall asleep as soon as his head touches the pillow.

After a few sleepless nights, I asked him once to teach me his secret.

"It's easy," he said. "All you have to do is close your eyes," which I did. Then he said, "Think of something nice," which I did.

After a few moments' silence, I asked, "What do I do next?"

Too late — my husband was off to sleep again!

— Mrs P. B., Rushden.

## HANDSHAKE

A young housewife in our road was standing by her front door holding hands with the postman.

I must have looked shocked, for she called out: "Don't get the wrong impression, it's the only way I can convince our dog that the postman is not a burglar."

— Mrs E. McW., Lancs.  
[Hope her husband believes that if he finds out!]

## HOUSEHOLD HINTS

### PRESERVE IT!

When making jam or marmalade, grease the pan well with butter first. There will be no scum, saving the waste of skimming, and the jam will have a nice, clear sheen.

— Mrs E. B., Hants.

### ON THE BOIL

An old non-stick pan can be cleaned and made like new again by boiling it up for ten minutes in the following solution: two tablespoonfuls of baking soda, mixed with one cup of liquid bleach and two cups of water.

— Mrs R. L., Peckham.

# Little Orphan Annie

MRS ANDERSON, Matron of the Shady Nook Children's Home, studied the couple seated before her for a moment.

"Yes" she said. "Annie is a perfectly normal, healthy girl."

"Good," Mr Frost said approvingly.

Mrs Anderson picked up a china bird on her desk. It had been given to her several years before by a couple who had adopted a ten-year-old boy with happy results.

"You realise, of course," she said, "that it might be some time before the adoption is approved. We will have to have you thoroughly investigated."

"We know that," Mrs Frost, an expensively-dressed, aggressive-looking woman of about 35, said. "But it shouldn't take *too* long. After all, we're not asking to adopt a baby. I bet there isn't much demand for children Annie's age."

"Not very much," Mrs Anderson admitted. "Most people prefer to adopt babies."

Mrs Frost smiled stiffly. "Babies must be a lot of trouble. Anyway, we need — I mean we feel that a girl about Annie's age would be just right for us. She's about eleven, isn't she?"

Mrs Anderson nodded.

Mr Frost settled back in his chair. "We can stand any kind of investigation. There are no skeletons in our cupboard."

"James is the Assistant District Manager for Milton Paper Products in this area," Mrs Frost said haughtily. "He earns quite a good salary, so we can afford Annie. Of course, we had hoped to find a girl with blonde hair, but I think I can do something about that."

"She's the right age," Mr Frost said emphatically. "And from what we've seen of her . . ." He glanced out of the window. "She seems to be a well-behaved, quiet child. Not boisterous and active like the others."

Mrs Anderson followed his gaze.

Annie was standing next to the old lilac bush, watching the other children play with a ball. She was smiling while her fingers caressed a cluster of lilacs.

No, Annie could not be called a boisterous child, Mrs Anderson admitted to herself. But neither was she as demure and quiet as her present occupation might indicate.

Mrs Anderson smiled slightly. There were times when Annie could be a handful. Annie had imagination . . .

SHE turned her attention back to the couple before her.

"Have you definitely decided that you want a girl?" she asked. "We have a shy, gentle boy . . ."

"Oh, no!" Mr Frost declared in a loud voice. "It must be a girl. Mr Brennan . . ."

"We'll send her to the best schools," Mrs

Frost broke in quickly. "And Guide camp. Right now I'm having one of the bedrooms redecorated for her. Rose pink."

Mr Frost smiled briefly. "Because of the encyclopedias. We bought a set and the bookcase came with it. Can't keep them in the living-room. That's green."

"We want a normal child," Mr Frost said. "She's not disturbed or anything, is she? I know that her parents were killed in an air crash over a year ago, but what kind of people were they?"

"Her father taught art, and her mother was a concert pianist before her marriage," Mrs Anderson said.

"Good," Mr Frost approved. "I hope she's a tidy girl. Emily keeps the flat as neat as a pin. A place for everything and everything in its place. That's our motto."

"We live in Hamilton Tower," Mrs Frost offered.

"It's exclusive," Mr Frost said. "Only the best people live there. Mr Brennan has a flat on the same floor."

"Mr Brennan?"

"The District Manager. In a year or so he'll move up to the Board of Directors. That will leave his position open and . . ." Mr Frost smiled and shrugged slightly.

"Mr Brennan is very fond of my husband," Mrs Frost added. "And James is next in line for his job. If James is recommended, of course. We have the Brennans in for dinner every Thursday."

Mr Frost nodded. "They often bring their daughter along. They have a hard time finding anybody who'll play with . . ."

"She's eleven," Mrs Frost said quickly. "Really a nice child. Does Annie get along with other children?"

"Oh, yes," Mrs Anderson said. She fingered the china bird, then laid it down on its side. "Annie is easy to handle."

"We've only seen Annie from a distance," Mrs Frost said. "Could we see her and talk to her now?"

"Of course," Mrs Anderson said. "Excuse me. I'll go and send for her."

WHEN Annie opened the door she paused and her violet eyes went round the room. She smiled gently.

"Annie," Mrs Anderson said, "this is Mr and Mrs Frost."

"They'd like to talk to you," Mrs Anderson said. "We can't promise anything, but . . ."

Mrs Frost regarded Annie critically. "You'll have a room of your own. And we'll see that you have the best clothes."

Annie smiled. "A room of my own? My very own?"

"Yes," Mrs Frost said. "Pink."

"I like pink," Annie said. She clapped her hands. "And then I'll have some place to keep my collection."

"Mrs Anderson makes me keep my



## Small, yes. Innocent, maybe. Helpless, no!

collection in the garden shed ever since my grass snake got away and bit Jimmy. But Jimmy wasn't really hurt, and besides, he was teasing it."

"Annie," Mrs Anderson said, "I think you'll have to leave your snake here."

Disappointment shadowed Annie's face. She turned to Mrs Frost. "But can't I at least take Elmer along? I feed Elmer flies and he won't be any bother. He's just a toad, you know."

"There'll be no snakes or toads in my flat," Mrs Frost said firmly.

Annie sighed. "I know they'll miss me."

Her eyes went to the box of matches on the desk and her hand quickly darted out.

"Annie," Mrs Anderson said, "put those down."

The violet eyes turned towards the curtains and she began humming softly.

"Annie," Mrs Anderson said sharply, "put those matches down! Right now."

Mr and Mrs Frost looked at Mrs Anderson. Then Mrs Frost said, "Mrs Anderson, I'm afraid that Annie . . ."

**W**HEN they were gone, Mrs Anderson turned to Annie. "You could have said you didn't like them. That would have been enough."

Annie grinned. "But that would have been dull. Snakes were the worst thing I could think of. And toads. I think I'll be an actress when I grow up."

Mrs Anderson smiled. "You'll be a good one. That was a very convincing performance."

Annie's eyes sparkled mischievously. "And you picked up your lines beautifully. I think you should have been an actress. I saw that part about the matches in a film once."

Annie moved over to the desk and put the china bird upright. "Someday when I come in, you'll have the bird standing up, and that'll be the signal that they're the right ones for me."

"Yes, Annie. One of these days it will be standing up."

Annie sighed. "Sometimes I think that anybody would be better than nobody."

"It may seem that way sometimes, Annie," Mrs Anderson said. "But I think it's wiser to wait a little longer."

"For the right people?"

"For the right parents," Mrs Anderson said, smiling. "I've got a feeling they'll be coming soon, Annie. Very soon."

"Funny," Annie said. "I got the same feeling suddenly . . . The very same feeling, Mrs Anderson. Maybe tomorrow?"

"Maybe tomorrow," Mrs Anderson agreed, stroking Annie's hair. ●

Complete story by Jack Ritchie and Irma Reitci